

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

This park comprises a great diversity of morphologies, from the karstic relieves in the toplands (above 1000 metres in height) to the bad-lands in Gebas. Geologically, this area belongs to the betic mountain range. The deep valleys are bordered by El Morrón or the Leyva Walls, astonishing limestone formations.

The centre and northern zones are formed by the lands comprising the Espuña river basin, crossing this area from the west to the east. There are also two deep precipices, Espuña River

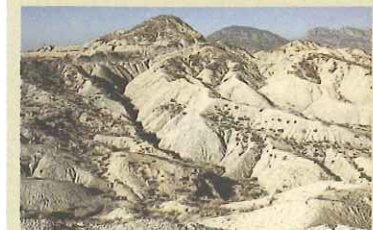
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and Leyva, separated by a line formed by the summits of Collado Blanco, Morra del Majal and Morrón de Espuña (the highest peak reaching 1,580 m. in height), Collado Bermejo and Peña Apartada.

The southern area is made up by the basins of El Barranco de Enmedio and Rambla de Algeciras. Both of them are separated by a divide joining Peña Apartada, Puntal del Campanero y de los Albaricoqueros.

The third area, The Gebas Precipice, located in the most easterly sector, is without doubt a valuable environment due to its

bad-lands morphology, resembling a desert.



suggestions for visitors

- You are in a protected area of beautiful landscape and great natural value, which we attempt to preserve for the future generations. So during your visit try not to forget...
- Use authorised roads and footpaths.
- Domestic animals must be hold.
- Camping and/or caravanning are not permitted in the area.
- Respect private propriety.
- Do not disturb neither harm animals and plants.
- Do not light fire unless authorised to do so.
- Please, use the garbage bins.
- For emergency, call number 112.

More information

- Consejería de Desarrollo Sostenible y Ordenación del Territorio (Council of Sustainable Development)
Tel.: 968 22 89 37/38 • Fax: 968 22 89 38
- Sistema de Información Geográfica y Ambiental (SIGA) (Environmental and Geographic Information System)
www.carm.es/medioambiente/
- Queries and Suggestions:
medioambiente@listas.carm.es



Región de Murcia
Consejería de Desarrollo Sostenible y Ordenación del Territorio
Dirección General del Medio Natural



Regional Park
Sierra Espuña



DISEÑO: TROPA - IMPRIME: GRÁFICAS SAN GINÉS - D.L.: MU-367

introduction

This Regional Park is located in the most easterly sector of the Betic mountain range, inside the Segura River Basin with an east-west direction lay-out. It presents a very rough relief, ranging from 200 to 1500 m. in height. This makes possible the existence of great

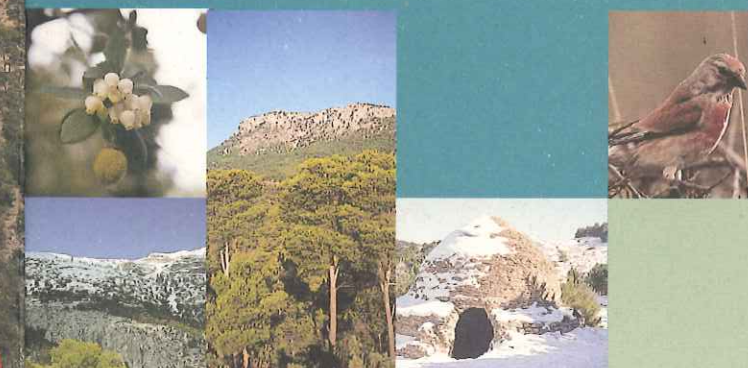


rocking escarpments, secondary valleys and precipices towards the four cardinal points. The conservation of the natural values in this Protected Landscape dates back to 1917, when its inclusion into the National Catalogue of Nature Spaces. Later, in 1931 it was declared Natural Site of National Interest and Nature Reserve in 1978.

In 1992 it is declared Regional Park and in 1995 The Barranco de Gebas becomes a Protected Landscape. The two of them lie on an extension of 17,804 h.

Its environmental singularity has made this area to be included in the European Natura 2000 Network. In 1998 it was declared a Special Bird Protection Area and later proposed to be a Site of Community Importance.

information on the protected natural areas



fauna

Animal life is of a great variety in this zone. Amongst insects we can find the "Aricia Morronensis", a butterfly that usually lives in the mountain mass. Amphibious such as the natterjack toad or the Iberian painted frog and reptiles such as the Montpellier snake, the ocellated lizard and the snub-nosed viper can also be found in this area. But birds are, without doubt, the wider group. Great tits, long tailed tits and crossbills take shelter in the woodlands. Goshawks and sparrowhawks lay in wait during the daylight but at night, tawny owls and eagle owls can be heard.



Long-tailed tit

The borders of the pinelands and scrublands are the favourite sites for buntings, finches and true thrushes, together with booted eagles and golden eagles. Due to the presence of these species, this park has been

clared Special Bird Protection Area. Amongst the mammals, the most outstanding is the barbary sheep, also known as arrui, because of its size and its rareness. Brought in 1970, its population has quickly increased and thus, the area has been declared National Hunting Reserve in 1973. Besides some other species such as squirrels, common genets and wild cats complete the mammal family in this park



Barbary sheep



Goshawk

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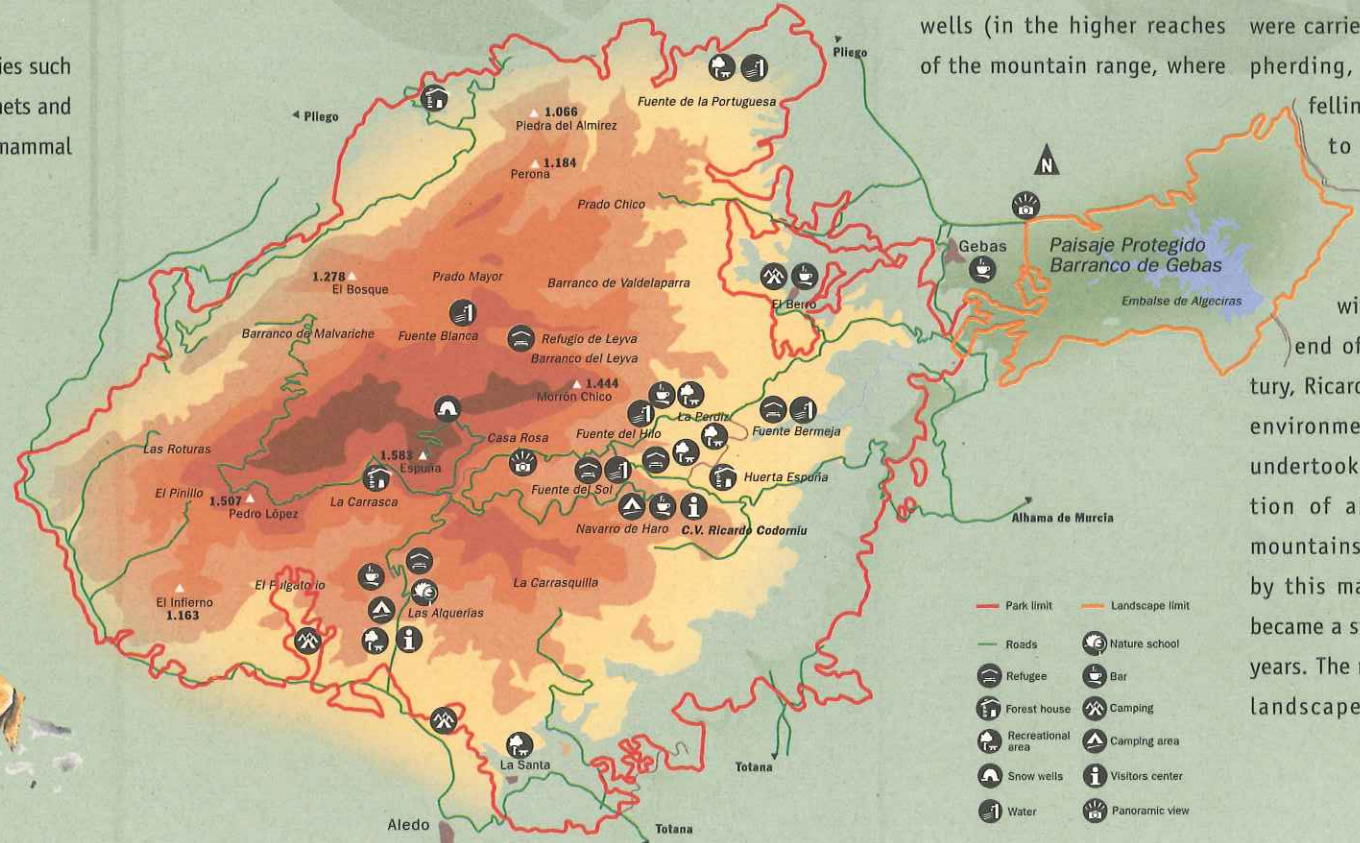
Vegetation

The Aleppo pine is the predominant tree species in this area but in the top lands there are more black pines. Holm oaks, Algerian oaks and maple trees can also be found. Along the watercourse and next to the sources there are elms and poplars, together with a gallery of bushes such as the honeysuckle, the rosebush, the sarsaparilla and some others.



Elm

In the slopes there is a low forest consisting of kermes oaks, mastic trees, Irish junipers, strawberry trees, etc. The differences between the suntrap and the shady side are noticeable because of the predominant vegetation cover. On the summit, the vegetation is adapted to extreme meteorological conditions, and it is represented by hedgehog brooms and junipers.



Men and Landscape

In the Moorish Spain the mountain mass of Aspuña was already known. It emerged from the fertile plains of the Guadalentin River, as a first point of reference. A gradual increase in the number of settlements in this area and the diversification of their tasks made easier the accessibility to this mountain range. Together with traditional activities, such as the management of the snow wells (in the higher reaches of the mountain range, where



of the 16th century and the first ice factory in Lorca at the beginnings of the 20th century, some other activities were carried out, such as shepherding, and massive tree

felling (to get charcoal, to build ships...). These turned this area almost into a desert zone, with no trees. At the end of the 19th century, Ricardo Cordoniu, an environmental engineer, undertook the reforestation of about 5000 h. of mountains. The effort made by this man from Cartagena became a struggle through the years. The result is the current landscape, where there is

abundance of pines next to fresh, narrow precipices, where honeysuckles, ash trees, willows and elms grow. Nowadays Sierra Espuña is a reference at European level.

The man has made use of this mountain range through the 20th century, finding a number of typical country cottages and settlements (El Berro, Gebas, El Purgatorio, Casas Nuevas), an old hospital for tuberculosis treatment (now abandoned), military buildings (El Morrón), and old farming houses.

Traditional dry farming is still carried out by people inhabiting the Protected Landscape of Barranco de Gebas, especially inland. Cattle raising is

still of great importance for those people living in Totana and Mula compatible with the existence of the arrui.



Strawberry tree

The Park suggests

In the Information and Management Centre Ricardo Codorniu, visitors can find brochures and leaflets with general information, or they can go round an exhibition. Trekking-lovers can enjoy of a wide network of paths and tracks closed to vehicles. There are a great number of interesting spots to admire in this park, among them; The Snow Wells, La Santa Hermitage, El Hilo and La Perdiz Recreational Areas, Leyva Valley and La Carrasca Forestry House, with great panoramic views where the arrui can be easily spotted.

